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The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is pleased to announce that it is seeking applications for funding to support basic scientific research that underlies the multidisciplinary field of forensic science. This program furthers the Department's mission by sponsoring research to provide objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet the challenges of crime and criminal justice, particularly at State and local levels.

## **Basic Scientific Research to Support Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes**

### **Eligibility**

In general, NIJ is authorized to make grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, States (including territories), units of local government (including federally recognized Indian tribal governments as determined by the Secretary of the Interior), nonprofit and for-profit organizations (including tribal nonprofit or for-profit organizations), institutions of higher education (including tribal institutions of higher education), and certain qualified individuals. For-profit organizations must agree to forgo any profit or management fee. NIJ may also enter into interagency agreements with Federal entities in appropriate cases. Foreign governments, foreign organizations, and foreign institutions of higher education are not eligible to apply.

NIJ may elect to make awards for applications submitted under this solicitation in future fiscal years, dependent on the merit of the applications and on the availability of appropriations in future years.

### **Deadline**

Applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. (See "How to Apply," page 10.) All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 1, 2013. (See "Deadlines: Registration and Application," page 3.)

### **Contact Information**

For technical assistance with submitting an application, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035 or via e-mail to support@grants.gov.

**Note:** The Grants.gov Support Hotline hours of operation are 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays.

For additional assistance with requirements, email NIJ at forensic.research@ojp.usdoj.gov. Additional information can be found at www.nij.gov/nij/funding/welcome.htm, and frequently asked questions that may assist with applying are posted at www.nij.gov/funding/faqs.htm.

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# Basic Scientific Research to Support Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes (CFDA No. 16.560)

## Overview

With this solicitation, NIJ seeks proposals for funding basic scientific research in the physical, life, and cognitive sciences that is designed to increase the knowledge underlying forensic science disciplines intended for use in the criminal justice system.

## Deadlines: Registration and Application

Applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. OJP encourages applicants to register several weeks before the application submission deadline. The deadline to apply for funding under this announcement is 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 1, 2013. See the “How to Apply” section on page 10 for details.

## Eligibility

Refer to the title page for eligibility under this program.

## Program-Specific Information

This solicitation seeks applications for funding basic scientific research in the physical, life and cognitive sciences that is designed to increase the knowledge underlying forensic science disciplines intended for use in the criminal justice system. For the purposes of this solicitation, the following definitions apply:

- Forensic—Of, relating to, or used in legal proceedings or argumentation.<sup>1</sup>
- Science—The observation, identification, description, experimental investigations, and theoretical explanation of natural phenomena.<sup>2</sup>
- Basic research—A systematic study directed toward a greater knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and of observable facts without specific applications toward any processes or products in mind. Basic research, however, may include activities with broad applications in mind.<sup>3</sup> (For the purposes of this solicitation, basic research must include activities with broad application to forensic sciences related to the criminal justice system.)
- Applied research—A systematic study to gain knowledge or understanding necessary to determine the means by which a recognized and specific need may be met.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Definition of *forensic* is taken from *Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary*.

<sup>2</sup> Definition of *science* is taken from *Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary*.

<sup>3</sup> Definition taken from Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11, *Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget*, Section 84—Character Classification (Schedule C).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

- Development—The systematic application of knowledge or understanding, directed toward the production of useful materials, devices, systems, or methods, including design, development, and improvement of prototypes and new processes to meet specific requirements.<sup>5</sup>

Basic scientific research proposals to this solicitation should be designed to lead to:

- a. Subsequent applied research and advanced technology developments in forensic science-related technologies intended for use in the criminal justice system, and/or
- b. New and improved crime laboratory functional capabilities that result in faster, more robust, more informative, less costly, or less labor-intensive identification, collection, preservation, and/or analysis of evidence.

The scientific and technical challenges inherent in basic scientific research can be significant. High-risk/high-payoff projects may fail for legitimate reasons. The risk of failure should be balanced by an outstanding scientific and management plan. Applicants proposing high-risk/high-payoff projects should identify them as such, elaborate key quantitative milestones to be achieved, and describe the consequences of not achieving those milestones in a reasonable period of time.

Proposals should describe the anticipated impact of the basic scientific research on one or more forensic science disciplines. Some of the forensic science disciplines are listed below (where available, links have also been provided to sites containing additional information).

- DNA and forensic biology ([www.dna.gov](http://www.dna.gov), [www.cstl.nist.gov/strbase](http://www.cstl.nist.gov/strbase), [www.swgdam.org](http://www.swgdam.org)).
- Forensic crime scene analysis ([www.swgstain.org](http://www.swgstain.org)).
- Forensic anthropology and forensic odontology ([www.swganth.org](http://www.swganth.org)).
- Controlled substances ([www.swgdrug.org](http://www.swgdrug.org)).
- Fire debris analysis and arson scene investigations ([www.ncfs.ucf.edu/twgfex](http://www.ncfs.ucf.edu/twgfex)).
- Firearms and toolmark identification ([www.swggun.org](http://www.swggun.org)).
- Latent print ([www.swgfast.org](http://www.swgfast.org)).
- Shoeprint/tire tread examination ([www.swgtread.org](http://www.swgtread.org)).
- Questioned documents ([www.swgdoc.org](http://www.swgdoc.org)).
- Trace evidence ([www.swgmat.org](http://www.swgmat.org)).
- Forensic toxicology ([www.swgtox.org](http://www.swgtox.org)).
- Medicolegal death investigations, to include forensic pathology ([www.swgmidi.org](http://www.swgmidi.org)).

Applicable physical, life, and cognitive sciences may include:

- Life Sciences (e.g., biology, genetics).
- Physics.
- Medicine/Dentistry (e.g., neurology, pathology, odontology).
- Mathematical Sciences.
- Material Science.
- Computer Science.
- Chemistry and Pharmacology.
- Psychology.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

## New Investigator Opportunities

NIJ is interested in funding new investigators in forensic science research as it pertains to NIJ's mission. Proposals whose principal investigators are defined as "new investigators" may, in appropriate circumstances, be given special consideration in award decisions.

To be considered a "new investigator" for purposes of this solicitation, one of the two sets of criteria below must be satisfied:

- The principal investigator must have received, no earlier than April 1, 2009, an initial appointment in the United States to a full-time junior faculty position at a university or to an equivalent full-time staff scientist position in a research institution; hold such a full-time appointment at the time of application submission; and must never have received NIJ funding for a research project, other than a Graduate Research Fellowship program grant. (Typically, the appropriate faculty rank is that of Assistant Professor, although some institutions may use a different title to designate junior faculty status.)
- The principal investigator must be an established researcher, who receives research funding originating from a federal science agency but has not successfully competed for NIJ funding as a principal investigator or collaborative researcher in the past 10 years. The investigator must hold a full-time appointment in the United States to a faculty position at a university or an equivalent position as a scientist on the staff of a research institution at the time of application submission.

In the case of a grant application that involves more than one principal investigator, all principal investigators must meet the definition of "new investigator" in order for the application to be considered as one from a "new investigator."

## Reading Resources:

Information on NIJ's research and development programs related to the forensic sciences (including previously funded projects) can be found at:  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/forensics/welcome.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/forensics/welcome.htm).

The following are examples of documents that may provide additional information to prospective applicants about forensic sciences.

- *Criminalistics: An Introduction to Forensic Science* (7th ed.), by R. Saferstein (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998) ISBN 0-13-592940-7.
- *Forensic Science Handbook* (Vol. I, 2nd ed.), edited by R. Saferstein (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002) ISBN 0-13-091058-9.
- *Forensic Science Handbook* (Vol. II, 2nd ed.), edited by R. Saferstein (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005) ISBN 0-13-112434-X.
- *Forensic Science Handbook* (Vol. III), edited by R. Saferstein (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993) ISBN 0-13-325390-2.
- *Fundamentals of Forensic Science*, by M. Houck and J. Siegel (Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press, 2006) ISBN 0-12-356762-9.
- *Forensic Chemistry*, by S. Bell (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006) ISBN 0-13-147835-4.

- *Advanced Topics in Forensic DNA Typing: Methodology*, by J. Butler (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2011) ISBN 978-0-12-374513-2.
- *Fundamentals of Forensic DNA Typing*, by J. Butler (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2009) ISBN 0-12-374999-4.
- *Forensic Pathology: Practical Aspects of Criminal & Forensic Investigations* (2nd ed.), by D. Di Maio and V. Di Maio (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2001) ISBN 0-84-930072-X.
- *Spitz and Fisher's Medicolegal Investigation of Death: Guidelines for the Application of Pathology to Crime Investigation*, by W. Spitz, D. Spitz, and R. Fisher (Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas Publisher, 2006) ISBN 0-398-07544-1.
- *Quantitative-Qualitative Friction Ridge Analysis: An Introduction to Basic and Advanced Ridgeology*, by D. Ashbaugh (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 1999) ISBN 0-8493-7007-8.
- *Principles of Forensic Toxicology: Revised and Updated* (2nd ed.), by B. Levine (Washington, DC: American Association for Clinical Chemistry, Inc., 2006) ISBN 1-59-425053-7.
- "Confirmation Bias: A Ubiquitous Phenomenon in Many Guises," by R.S. Nickerson, *Review of General Psychology* 2(2) (June 1998): 175-220.
- "The Vision in 'Blind' Justice: Expert Perception, Judgment and Visual Cognition in Forensic Pattern Recognition," by I.E. Dror and S. Cole, *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review* 17(2) (2010): 161-167.

#### Amount and Length of Awards

Total funding for this solicitation and the number of awards made will depend on the availability of funds, the quality of the applications, and other pertinent factors. **All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.** In FY 2012, NIJ provided more than \$15 million in grants to fund research and development projects related to forensic science, including DNA. NIJ funding for an individual research project rarely exceeds \$500,000 annually, although total funding for projects requiring multiple years to complete has exceeded \$1 million in some cases. In FY 2012, the average forensic science research and development award size was approximately \$195,000 per year, and the average project period was 2 years. If feasible, NIJ recommends that applicants divide the proposed work into discrete phases, with each phase resulting in the delivery of a measurable deliverable. Applicants should try to structure the phases so that the funding required in any fiscal year will not exceed \$500,000. Although NIJ cannot guarantee that subsequent phases, stages or tasks will be funded, this approach will enable NIJ to fund the proposed work incrementally, depending on, among other things, the quality of the deliverable at the end of each phase, strategic priorities, and the availability of funds. However, applicants should not divide their work if it is not feasible to do so without impairing the technical and programmatic soundness of their approach. **Note:** Deliverables (e.g., technical reports) will be required at the end of each phase to enable NIJ to assess the progress of the work and assist NIJ in making reasoned determinations as to the suitability of funding the next phase of the work.

Applicants should be aware that the total period for an award ordinarily will not exceed 3 years. FY 2013 award announcements are expected to be made by September 30, 2013. Applicants may wish to consider proposing project period start dates commencing on January 1, 2014.

**Please note:** All applicants under this solicitation must comply with Department of Justice regulations on confidentiality and human subjects' protection. See "Other Requirements for OJP Applications" at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other\\_requirements.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm).

**What will not be funded:**

1. Provision of training or direct service.
2. Proposals primarily to purchase equipment, materials, or supplies. (The budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct basic research. Proposals that include equipment purchases should include a discussion of how federally funded equipment is proposed to be used after the funded work has been completed and/or the project period has ended. Note that OJP may issue specific equipment disposition instructions in appropriate circumstances.)
3. Work that will be funded under another specific solicitation.
4. Proposals that do not contain a research component or do not respond to the specific goals of this solicitation.
5. Proposals addressing applied research or development in forensic science. Applicants proposing such studies may consider submitting applications to the planned NIJ FY 2013 solicitation entitled "Applied Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes."
6. Proposals addressing both a basic research *and* an applied research or development component. Applicants should submit basic research studies **only**. (In order to illustrate broad applications to forensic science, proposals may reference foreseeable applied research or development work that may result from the proposed basic research; however, applications proposing applied research or development activities will not be considered).
7. Proposals that focus primarily on non-human animal DNA or non-human animal biological components.
8. Proposals in the area of digital evidence or digital forensics. Digital evidence includes information stored or transmitted in binary form that may be relied on in court. It is typically found on computer hard drives, mobile phones, personal digital assistants, CDs, flash memory equipment and other electronic devices. Digital evidence is commonly associated with electronic crime (e.g., child pornography or credit card fraud); however, digital evidence can also be used as forensic evidence in other types of crimes.<sup>6</sup>
9. Costs associated with conducting conferences. A conference is a symposium, seminar, workshop, or any other organized and formal meeting, whether conducted face-to-face or via the Internet, where individuals assemble (or meet virtually) to exchange information and views or explore or clarify a defined subject, problem, or area of knowledge, whether or not a published report results from such meeting. A meeting where a gathering discusses general matters as part of a normal course of doing business is not considered a conference. Funds may be used to *attend* conferences for the purposes of dissemination of research findings.

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<sup>6</sup>See generally [www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/evidence/digital/welcome.htm](http://www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/evidence/digital/welcome.htm)

## Budget Information

### **Limitation on Use of Award Funds for Employee Compensation; Waiver**

With respect to any award of more than \$250,000 made under this solicitation, Federal funds may not be used to pay total cash compensation (salary plus bonuses) to any employee of the award recipient at a rate that exceeds 110% of the maximum annual salary payable to a member of the Federal Government's Senior Executive Service (SES) at an agency with a Certified SES Performance Appraisal System for that year. The 2012 salary table for SES employees is available at [www.opm.gov/oca/12tables/indexSES.asp](http://www.opm.gov/oca/12tables/indexSES.asp). **Note:** A recipient may compensate an employee at a higher rate, provided the amount in excess of this compensation limitation is paid with non-Federal funds. (Any such additional compensation will not be considered matching funds where match requirements apply.)

The limitation on compensation rates allowable under an award may be waived on an individual basis at the discretion of the Director of the National Institute of Justice. An applicant requesting a waiver should include a detailed justification in the budget narrative of its application. Unless the applicant submits a waiver request and justification with the application, the applicant should anticipate that OJP will request the applicant to adjust and resubmit its budget.

The justification should include the particular qualifications and expertise of the individual, the uniqueness of the service being provided, the individual's specific knowledge of the program or project being undertaken with award funds, and a statement explaining that the individual's salary is commensurate with the regular and customary rate for an individual with his/her qualifications and expertise, and for the work to be done.

### **Minimization of Conference Costs**

No OJP funding can be used to purchase food and/or beverages for any meeting, conference, training, or other event. Exceptions to this restriction may be made only in cases where such sustenance is not otherwise available (i.e., extremely remote areas), or where a special presentation at a conference requires a plenary address where there is no other time for sustenance to be obtained. Such an exception would require prior approval from OJP. This restriction does not apply to water provided at no cost, but does apply to any and all other refreshments, regardless of the size or nature of the meeting. Additionally, this restriction does not impact direct payment of per diem amounts to individuals in a travel status under the organization's travel policy.

Updated Department of Justice and OJP guidance on conference planning, minimization of costs, and conference cost reporting is accessible on the OJP website at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/confcost.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/confcost.htm).

### **Costs Associated with Language Assistance (if applicable)**

If an applicant proposes a program or activity that would deliver services or benefits to individuals, the costs of taking reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to those services or benefits by individuals with limited English proficiency may be allowable costs. Reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to services or benefits may include interpretation or translation services where appropriate.

For additional information, see the "Civil Rights Compliance" section of the OJP "Other Requirements for OJP Applications" Web page ([www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other\\_requirements.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm)).



## Match Requirement

See “Cofunding” paragraph under “What an Application Should Include” (below).

## Performance Measures

To assist the Department in fulfilling its responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, Public Law 111-352, applicants that receive funding under this solicitation must provide data that measure the results of their work done under this solicitation. Any award recipient will be required, post award, to provide the data requested in the “Data Grantee Provides” column so that OJP can calculate values for the “Performance Measures” column. (Submission of performance measures data is not required for the application.) Performance measures for this solicitation are as follows:

| Objective  | Performance Measures  | Data Grantee Provides  |
|--|---|--|
| Gain knowledge and understanding of the forensic sciences for criminal justice purposes through basic scientific research. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Relevance to the needs of the field as measured by whether the grantee's substantive scope did not deviate from the funded proposal or any subsequent agency modifications to the scope.</li><li>2. Quality of the research as assessed by peer reviewers.</li><li>3. Quality of management as measured by whether significant interim project milestones were achieved, final deadlines were met, and costs remained within approved limits.</li><li>4. If applicable, number of NIJ final grant reports, NIJ research documents, and grantee research documents published.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A final report providing a comprehensive overview of the project and a detailed description of the project design, data, and methods; a full presentation of scientific findings; and a thorough discussion of the implications of the project findings for increasing the knowledge underlying forensic science disciplines intended for use in the criminal justice system in the United States.</li><li>2. Quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, and a final progress report.</li><li>3. If applicable, each data set that was collected, acquired, or modified in conjunction with the project.</li><li>4. If applicable, citation to report(s)/document(s).</li></ol> |

## Notice of Post-Award FFATA Reporting Requirement

Applicants should anticipate that OJP will require all recipients (other than individuals) of awards of \$25,000 or more under this solicitation, consistent with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA), to report award information on any first-tier subawards totaling \$25,000 or more, and, in certain cases, to report information on the names and total compensation of the five most highly compensated executives of the recipient and first-tier subrecipients. Each applicant entity must ensure that it has the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements should it receive funding. Reports regarding subawards will be made through the FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS), found at [www.fsrs.gov](http://www.fsrs.gov).

Please note also that applicants should anticipate that no subaward of an award made under this solicitation may be made to a subrecipient (other than an individual) unless the potential subrecipient acquires and provides a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.

## How to Apply

Applications will be submitted through Grants.gov. Grants.gov is a “one-stop storefront” that provides a unified process for all customers of federal awards to find funding opportunities and apply for funding. Complete instructions on how to register and submit an application can be found at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). If the applicant experiences technical difficulties at any point during this process, call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at **800–518–4726** or **606–545–5035**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays. Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, **processing delays may occur, and it can take up to several weeks** for first-time registrants to receive confirmation and a user password. OJP highly recommends that applicants start the registration process as early as possible to prevent delays in submitting an application package by the specified application deadline.

All applicants are required to complete the following steps:

1. **Acquire a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.** In general, the Office of Management and Budget requires that all applicants (other than individuals) for federal funds include a DUNS number in their applications for a new award or renewal of an existing award. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of entities receiving federal funds. The identifier is used for tracking purposes and to validate address and point of contact information for federal assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. The DUNS number will be used throughout the grant life cycle. Obtaining a DUNS number is a free, one-time activity. Obtain a DUNS number by calling Dun and Bradstreet at 866–705–5711 or by applying online at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com). A DUNS number is usually received within 1-2 business days.
2. **Acquire registration with the System for Award Management (SAM).** SAM replaces the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database as the repository for standard information about federal financial assistance applicants, recipients, and subrecipients. OJP requires all applicants (other than individuals) for federal financial assistance to maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Applicants must be registered in SAM to successfully register in Grants.gov. (Previously, organizations that had submitted applications via Grants.gov were registered with CCR, as it was a requirement for Grants.gov registration. SAM registration replaces CCR as a pre-requisite for Grants.gov registration.) Applicants must **update or renew their SAM registration annually** to maintain an active status.

Applicants that were previously registered in the CCR database must, at a minimum:

- Create a SAM account;
- Log in to SAM and migrate permissions to the SAM account (all the entity registrations and records should already have been migrated).

Applicants that were not previously registered in the CCR database must register in SAM prior to registering in Grants.gov. Information about SAM registration procedures can be accessed at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).

3. **Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a Grants.gov username and password.** Complete the AOR profile on Grants.gov and create a username and password. The applicant organization's DUNS number must be used to complete this step. For more information about the registration process, go to [www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp).
4. **Acquire confirmation for the AOR from the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC).** The E-Biz POC at the applicant organization must log into Grants.gov to confirm the applicant organization's AOR. Note that there can be more than one AOR for the organization.
5. **Search for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov.** Use the following identifying information when searching for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for this solicitation is 16.560, titled "National Institute of Justice Research, Evaluation, and Development Project Grants," and the funding opportunity number is NIJ-2013-3362.
6. **Complete the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.** All applicants must complete this information. An applicant that expends any funds for lobbying activities must provide the detailed information requested on the form, *Disclosure of Lobbying Activities* (SF-LLL). An applicant that does not expend any funds for lobbying activities should enter "N/A" in the required highlighted fields.
7. **Submit an application consistent with this solicitation by following the directions in Grants.gov.** Within 24–48 hours after submitting the electronic application, the applicant should receive an e-mail validation message from Grants.gov. The validation message will state whether the application has been received and validated, or rejected, with an explanation. **Important:** Applicants are urged to submit applications **at least 72 hours prior** to the due date of the application to allow time to receive the validation message and to correct any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.

**Note: Grants.gov will forward the application to OJP's Grants Management System (GMS). GMS does not accept executable file types as application attachments.** These disallowed file types include, but are not limited to, the following extensions: ".com," ".bat," ".exe," ".vbs," ".cfg," ".dat," ".db," ".dbf," ".dll," ".ini," ".log," ".ora," ".sys," and ".zip."

**Note: Duplicate Applications**

If an applicant submits multiple versions of an application, NIJ will review the most recent version submitted.

**Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues**

If an applicant experiences unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond the applicant's control that prevent submission of its application by the deadline, the applicant must send an email to the NIJ email address in the Contact Information section on the title page **within 24 hours after the application deadline** and request approval to submit its application. The applicant must include in the e-mail: a description of the technical difficulties, a timeline of submission efforts, the complete grant application, the applicant DUNS number, and Grants.gov Help Desk or SAM tracking number(s) the applicant has received. **Note: Requests are not automatically approved by NIJ.** After the program office reviews all of the information

submitted, and contacts the Grants.gov or SAM Help Desks to validate the technical issues reported, OJP will contact the applicant to either approve or deny the request to submit a late application. If the technical issues reported cannot be validated, the application will be rejected as untimely.

The following conditions are not valid reasons to permit late submissions: (1) failure to begin the registration process in sufficient time, (2) failure to follow Grants.gov instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its Web site, (3) failure to follow all of the instructions in the OJP solicitation, and (4) technical issues experienced with the applicant's computer or information technology (IT) environment, including firewalls.

Notifications regarding known technical problems with Grants.gov, if any, are posted at the top of the OJP funding Web page at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/solicitations.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/solicitations.htm).

## What an Application Should Include

Applicants should anticipate that failure to submit an application that contains all of the specified elements may negatively affect the review of the application; and, should a decision be made to make an award, it may result in the inclusion of special conditions that preclude access to or use of award funds pending satisfaction of the conditions.

Moreover, applicants should anticipate that applications that are unresponsive to the scope of the solicitation, or that do not include application elements designated by NIJ to be critical, will neither proceed to peer review nor receive further consideration. Under this solicitation, NIJ has designated the following application elements as critical: program narrative, budget detail worksheet and budget narrative, and résumés/curriculum vitae of key personnel. The Budget Narrative and the Budget Detail Worksheet may be combined in one document. However, if only one document is submitted, it must contain **both** narrative and detail information.

OJP strongly recommends use of appropriately descriptive file names (e.g., "Program Narrative," "Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative," "Timelines," "Memoranda of Understanding," "Résumés") for all attachments. OJP recommends that résumés be included in a single file.

### 1. Information to Complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

The SF-424 is a standard form required for use as a cover sheet for submission of pre-applications, applications, and related information. Grants.gov and GMS take information from the applicant's profile to populate the fields on this form. When selecting "type of applicant," if the applicant is an for-profit entity, select "For-Profit Organization" or "Small Business" (as applicable).

### 2. Program Narrative

The program narrative section of the application should not exceed 12 single-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1-inch margins, of which a minimum of 6 pages should be dedicated to the description of the project/program design and execution. If included in the main body of the program narrative, then tables, charts, figures, and other illustrations do count toward the 12-page limit for the narrative section. Abstract, table of contents, appendices, and government forms do not count toward the 12-page limit for the narrative section.

If the program narrative fails to comply with these length-related restrictions, noncompliance may be considered in peer review and in final award decisions.

Program Narrative Guidelines:

- a. **Title Page** (not counted against the 12-page program narrative limit).  
The title page should include the title of the project, submission date, funding opportunity number, the applicant's name and complete contact information (i.e., name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address), and a list of key words/phrases relevant to the proposed research subject matter.
- b. **Project Abstract** (not counted against the 12-page program narrative limit and not to exceed 600 words).
- c. **Resubmit Response** (if applicable) (not counted against the 12-page program narrative limit). If an applicant is resubmitting a proposal that was presented previously to NIJ, but not funded, the applicant should indicate this. A statement should be provided, no more than two pages, addressing: (1) the title, submission date, and NIJ-assigned application number of the previous proposal, and (2) a brief summary of revisions to the proposal. This document should be inserted after the abstract.
- d. **Table of Contents** (not counted against the 12-page program narrative limit).
- e. **Main body.** The main body of the program narrative should describe the project in depth. The following sections should be included as part of the program narrative:
  - Statement of the Problem.
  - Project/Program Design and Execution (this section should account for a minimum of 6 pages of the main body of the narrative).
  - Capabilities/Competencies.
  - Impact/Outcomes, Evaluation, and Dissemination.Within these sections, the narrative should address:
  - Purpose, goals, and objectives.
  - Review of relevant literature.
  - Detailed description of research design and methods to include: research questions, hypotheses, description of sample, analysis plan, etc.
  - Management plan and organization.
  - Implications of the basic scientific research for increasing the knowledge underlying forensic science disciplines intended for use in the criminal justice system in the United States.
- f. **Appendices** (not counted against the 12-page program narrative limit) include:
  - Bibliography/references.
  - Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/charts/graphs, or maps pertaining to the proposed study that are supplemental to such items included in the main body of the narrative (tables, charts, graphs, or other relevant illustrations essential for comprehension of the

project/program design should be included in the main body of the narrative).

- Supporting data—Includes any preliminary data to support the investigator's ability to perform the work and/or proof of principle for the proposed research.
- Curriculum vitae, résumés or biographical sketches of key personnel. (Curriculum vitae, résumés or biographical sketches should be limited to no more than 2 pages per person).
- Project timeline and research calendar with expected milestones.
- Research independence and integrity (see "Selection Criteria," below).
- Human Subjects Protection paperwork, including Institutional Review Board (IRB) documentation and forms (see [www.ojp.gov/nij/funding/humansubjects/human-subjects.htm](http://www.ojp.gov/nij/funding/humansubjects/human-subjects.htm)).
- Privacy Certificate (for further guidance, go to [www.ojp.gov/nij/funding/humansubjects/privacy-certificate-guidance.htm](http://www.ojp.gov/nij/funding/humansubjects/privacy-certificate-guidance.htm)).
- Documentation of "new investigator" status, if applicable.
- Other funding:
  - List of previous and current NIJ awards to applicant organization and investigator(s).
  - List of current and pending non-NIJ support for each investigator collaborating on this proposal.
  - List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which this proposal has been submitted (if applicable).
- Letters of cooperation/support or administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), or letters of intent to establish MOUs (if applicable).
- Other materials specified by the solicitation.
- Data archiving plan (see descriptive paragraph below).

**Data Archiving Plan:** Applications should include a description of the proposed data management and archiving process. The submission of data has not been a requirement of the basic scientific research to support forensic science program; however, data may be requested on a case-by-case basis.

### 3. Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative

#### a. Budget Detail Worksheet

A sample Budget Detail Worksheet can be found at [www.ojp.gov/funding/forms/budget\\_detail.pdf](http://www.ojp.gov/funding/forms/budget_detail.pdf). If the budget is submitted in a different format, the budget categories listed in the sample budget worksheet should be included.

For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, see the OJP Financial Guide at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/index.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/index.htm).

b. **Budget Narrative**

The Budget Narrative should thoroughly and clearly describe every category of expense listed in the Budget Detail Worksheet. Proposed budgets are expected to be complete; reasonable and allowable; cost effective; and necessary for project activities. The narrative should be mathematically sound and correspond with the information and figures provided in the Budget Detail Worksheet. The narrative should explain how all costs were estimated and calculated and how they are relevant to the completion of the proposed project. The narrative may include tables for clarification purposes but need not be in a spreadsheet format. As with the Budget Detail Worksheet, the Budget Narrative should be broken down by year.

**Cofunding:** A grant made by NIJ under this solicitation may account for up to 100 percent of the total cost of the project. The application should indicate whether it is feasible for the applicant to contribute cash, facilities, or services as non-Federal support for the project. The application should identify generally any such contributions that the applicant expects to make and the proposed budget should indicate in detail which items, if any, will be supported with non-Federal contributions.

If a successful application proposes a voluntary match amount, the match amount incorporated into the OJP-approved budget becomes mandatory and subject to audit.

4. **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement** (if applicable)

Indirect costs are allowed only if the applicant has a federally approved indirect cost rate. (This requirement does not apply to units of local government.) A copy of the rate approval should be attached. If the applicant does not have an approved rate, one can be requested by contacting the applicant's cognizant Federal agency, which will review all documentation and approve a rate for the applicant organization or, if the applicant's accounting system permits, costs may be allocated in the direct cost categories. If DOJ is the cognizant Federal agency, obtain information needed to submit an indirect cost rate proposal at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/pdfs/indirect\\_costs.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/pdfs/indirect_costs.pdf).

5. **Tribal Authorizing Resolution** (if applicable)

If an application is being submitted by either (1) a tribe or tribal organization or (2) a third party proposing to provide direct services or assistance to residents on tribal lands, then a current authorizing resolution of the governing body of the tribal entity or other enactment of the tribal council or comparable governing body authorizing the inclusion of the tribe or tribal organization and its membership should be included with the application. In those instances when an organization or consortium of tribes proposes to apply for a grant on behalf of a tribe or multiple specific tribes, then the application should include a resolution (or comparable legal documentation, as may be applicable) from all tribes that will be included as a part of the services/assistance provided under the grant. A consortium of tribes for which existing consortium bylaws allow action without support from all tribes in the consortium (i.e., without authorizing resolution or other enactment of each tribal governing body) may submit a copy of its consortium bylaws with the application in lieu of tribal resolutions (or comparable legal documentation).

## 6. Additional Attachments

### List of Entities Involved in the Project

An application should include a stand-alone attachment titled "List of Entities" that lists the names of all entities that will be involved in the work. This list should include, but is not limited to: the organizations at which the investigators are employed; academic institutions at which grant-funded researchers are employed or enrolled; organizations that may receive subawards or contracts; and any organization(s) named in letters of cooperation/support, administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project, MOUs, or letters of intent to establish MOUs.

## 7. Other Standard Forms

Additional forms that may be required in connection with an award are available on OJP's funding page at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/forms.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/forms.htm). For successful applicants, receipt of funds may be contingent upon submission of all necessary forms. Note the following forms in particular.

- a. Standard Assurances  
Applicants must read, certify, and submit this form in GMS prior to the receipt of any award funds.
- b. Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements  
Applicants must read, certify, and submit in GMS prior to the receipt of any award funds.
- c. Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire (required for any applicant other than an individual that is a non-governmental entity and that has not received any award from OJP within the past 3 years; this form must be downloaded, completed, and submitted)

## Selection Criteria

Applications that meet basic minimum requirements will be evaluated by peer reviewers using the following criteria.

Depending on the number of applications received, applications may be categorized into discrete groups for purposes of peer review and/or selection for award.

### Statement of the Problem (Understanding of the problem and its importance)—5%

The proposal defines and demonstrates an understanding of the basic scientific problem.

1. Clarity of the description of the problem.
2. Strength of citations and other appropriate information to support the understanding of the problem.
3. Clarity of the description of how the scientific problem relates to a problem existing in forensic sciences as they relate to the criminal justice system.

### Project/Program Design and Execution (Quality and technical merit)—50%

1. Awareness of the state of current research, and identification of research gaps.



2. Soundness of methods and analytic and technical approach. (The overall strategy, methodology, and analyses should be well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project.)
3. Feasibility of proposed project and strength of supporting data. The proof-of-principle of the proposed basic scientific research should be established and supported by preliminary data presented in or referenced in the proposal. More innovative plans and/or plans with a higher potential for failure should be counterbalanced to manage the inherent risk (e.g., by firm theoretical basis; reasonable preliminary data, depending on the mechanism; the track record of the lead investigators; and an outstanding scientific and management plan).
4. Practicality of the proposed timeline relative to the project design. (Are the timeline and milestones logical and realistic? Are milestones adequately developed and quantitative, to serve as effective guidance for assessment of progress by the investigators and NIJ?)
5. Awareness of pitfalls and feasibility of proposed actions to minimize and/or mitigate these. (Are key scientific and technical barriers and dependencies identified?)
6. Innovation and creativity (when appropriate). (To what extent does the proposed project suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?)

**Capabilities/Competencies** (Capabilities, demonstrated productivity, and experience of applicants)—30%

1. Qualifications and experience of proposed staff. (Principal investigators (PIs) should have appropriate experience and training and should demonstrate an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s). If the project is collaborative or multi-PI, investigators should have complementary and integrated expertise.)
2. Qualifications of the PI(s). (The PI(s) should have a proven record of publishing in high-impact, peer-reviewed scientific journals.)
3. Demonstrated ability of proposed staff and organization to manage the effort.
4. Adequacy of the plan to manage the project, including how various tasks are subdivided and resources are used.
5. Strength of the scientific environment (e.g., institutional support, equipment and other physical resources, or collaborative arrangements) in which the work will be done and its contribution to the probability of success.

**Impact/Outcomes, Evaluation, and Dissemination** (Relevance to increasing the scientific knowledge underlying forensic science disciplines intended for use in the criminal justice system)—15%

1. Potential for significant advances in scientific understanding of the problem.
2. Potential for significant advances in the physical, life, and cognitive science fields, with a broad impact on forensic sciences intended for use in the criminal justice system in the United States.
3. Well-defined plan for the grant recipient to disseminate results to appropriate audiences, including researchers, and, in line with NIJ's mission, forensic science researchers and practitioners in the criminal justice system. (Does the proposal include a clear description of how final research findings will be shared? Does the dissemination strategy include intentions to publish in high-impact, peer-reviewed scientific journals? Does the dissemination strategy include a plan to maximize the outreach to researchers and practitioners in the criminal justice system?)

## **Budget**

Reviewers will consider and may comment on the following additional items in the context of scientific and technical merit.

1. Total cost of the project relative to the perceived benefit (cost-effectiveness).
2. Appropriateness of the budget relative to the level of effort and proposed timeline.
3. Leveraging the existing scientific environment to conserve costs.

The budget criteria will also be considered by the program office.

## **Research Independence and Integrity**

Regardless of a proposal's rating under the criteria outlined above, in order to receive funds, the applicant's proposal must demonstrate research independence, including appropriate safeguards to ensure research objectivity and integrity.

For purposes of this solicitation, research independence and integrity pertains only to ensuring that the design, conduct, or reporting of research funded by NIJ grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts will not be biased by any financial interest on the part of the investigators responsible for the research or on the part of the applicant.

In the appendix dealing with research independence and integrity, the applicant must explain the process and procedures that the applicant has put in place to identify and manage potential financial conflicts of interest on the part of its staff, consultants, and/or subrecipients. It must also identify any potential organizational financial conflicts of interest on the part of the applicant with regard to the proposed research. If the applicant believes that there are no potential organizational financial conflicts of interest, the applicant must provide a brief narrative explanation of why it believes that to be the case.

Where potential organizational financial conflicts of interest exist, in the appendix the applicant must identify the safeguards the applicant has put in place to address those conflicts of interest.

Considerations in evaluating research independence and integrity will include, but may not be limited to, the adequacy of the applicant's efforts to identify factors that could affect the objectivity/integrity of the proposed staff and/or the organization in carrying out the research, development, or evaluation activity; and the adequacy of the applicant's existing or proposed remedies to control any such factors.

## **Review Process**

OJP is committed to ensuring a fair and open process for awarding grants. NIJ reviews the application to make sure that the information presented is reasonable, understandable, measurable, and achievable, as well as consistent with the solicitation.

Peer reviewers will review the applications submitted under this solicitation that meet basic minimum requirements. NIJ may use either internal peer reviewers, external peer reviewers, or a combination, to review the applications under this solicitation. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the subject matter of a given solicitation who is NOT a current DOJ employee. An internal reviewer is a current DOJ employee who is well-versed or has expertise in the subject matter of this solicitation. Applications that meet basic minimum requirements will be evaluated,

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scored, and rated by a peer review panel. Peer reviewers' ratings and any resulting recommendations are advisory only. In addition to peer review ratings, considerations for award recommendations and decisions may include, but are not limited to, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance, "new investigator" status, and available funding.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), in consultation with NIJ, conducts a financial review of applications for potential discretionary awards to evaluate the fiscal integrity and financial capability of applicants; examines proposed costs to determine if the Budget Detail Worksheet and Budget Narrative accurately explain project costs; and determines whether costs are reasonable, necessary, and allowable under applicable federal cost principles and agency regulations.

All final award decisions will be made by the Director of the National Institute of Justice, who also may give consideration to factors including, but not limited to, underserved populations, geographic diversity, strategic priorities, past performance, "new investigator" status, and available funding when making awards.

## **Additional Requirements**

Applicants selected for awards must agree to comply with additional legal requirements upon acceptance of an award. OJP strongly encourages applicants to review the information pertaining to these additional requirements prior to submitting an application. Additional information for each requirement can be found at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other\\_requirements.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm).

- Civil Rights Compliance
- Civil Rights Compliance Specific to State Administering Agencies
- Faith-Based and Other Community Organizations
- Confidentiality
- Research and the Protection of Human Subjects
- Anti-Lobbying Act
- Financial and Government Audit Requirements
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- DOJ Information Technology Standards (if applicable)
- Single Point of Contact Review
- Non-Supplanting of State or Local Funds
- Criminal Penalty for False Statements

- Compliance with Office of Justice Programs Financial Guide
- Suspension or Termination of Funding
- Nonprofit Organizations
- For-profit Organizations
- Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)
- Rights in Intellectual Property
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006
- Awards in Excess of \$5,000,000 – Federal Taxes Certification Requirement
- Policy and Guidance for Conference Approval, Planning and Reporting
- OJP Training Guiding Principles for Grantees and Subgrantees

If a proposal is funded, the award recipient will be required to submit several reports and other materials, including:

**Final technical report:** The final report should be a comprehensive overview of the project and should include a detailed description of the project design, data, and methods; a full presentation of scientific findings, placed in the context of existing literature; a thorough discussion of the implications of the project findings for increasing the knowledge underlying forensic science disciplines intended for use in the criminal justice system in the United States; etc. It must contain an abstract of no more than 600 words and an executive summary of 2,500 to 4,000 words.

A draft of the final report, abstract, and executive summary must be submitted 90 days before the end date of the grant. The draft final report will be peer reviewed upon submission. The reviews will be forwarded to the principal investigator with suggestions for revisions. The author must then submit the revised final report, abstract, and executive summary by the end date of the grant. The abstract, executive summary, and final report must be submitted in electronic format.

**Interim reports:** Grantees must submit quarterly financial reports, semi-annual progress reports, a final progress report, and, if applicable, an annual audit report in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133. Grantees should anticipate that semi-annual progress reports will be required to follow the non-budgetary components of the Research Performance Progress Report template/format. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if reports are delinquent.

## **Provide Feedback to OJP on This Solicitation**

To assist OJP in improving its application and award processes, we encourage applicants to provide feedback on this solicitation, the application submission process, and/or the application review/peer review process. Feedback can be provided to [OJPSolicitationFeedback@usdoj.gov](mailto:OJPSolicitationFeedback@usdoj.gov).

## Application Checklist

### Basic Scientific Research to Support Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes

This application checklist has been created to assist in developing an application.

#### What an Application Should Include:

- ☐ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see page 12)
- ☐ Appendices to the Program Narrative (see page 14)
  - ☐ Bibliography/references
  - ☐ Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/charts/graphs, or maps pertaining to the proposed study that supplement those in the narrative
  - ☐ Supporting data—This should include any preliminary data to support the investigator's ability to perform the work and/or proof of principle for the proposed research
  - ☐ Curriculum vitae, résumés, or biographical sketches of key personnel
  - ☐ Project timeline and research calendar with expected milestones
  - ☐ Research independence and integrity
  - ☐ Human Subjects Protection paperwork
  - ☐ Privacy Certificate
  - ☐ Documentation of "new investigator" status, if applicable
  - ☐ Other funding:
    - ☐ List of previous and current NIJ awards to applicant organization and investigator(s)
    - ☐ List of current and pending non-NIJ support for each investigator collaborating on this proposal
    - ☐ List of other agencies, organizations, or funding sources to which this proposal has been submitted (if applicable)
  - ☐ Letters of cooperation/support, administrative agreements from organizations collaborating in the project, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), or letters of intent to establish MOUs (if applicable)
  - ☐ Data archiving plan
- ☐ Budget Detail Worksheet (see page 14)
- ☐ Budget Narrative (see page 15)
- ☐ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) (see page 11)
- ☐ Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see page 15)
- ☐ Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) (see page 15)
- ☐ Program Narrative/Abstract Format: (see page 13)
  - ☐ Single-spaced
  - ☐ 12-point standard font
  - ☐ 1" standard margins
  - ☐ Narrative is 12 pages or less
  - ☐ Project/Program Design and Execution is at least 6 pages of the main body of the narrative
- ☐ Additional Attachments (see page 16)
  - ☐ List of Entities Involved in the Project
- ☐ Other Standard Forms as applicable (see page 16), including:
  - ☐ Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire (if applicable)